



U.S. Department of Justice  
United States Attorney  
District of Kansas

## NEWS RELEASE

Eric Melgren, U.S. Attorney

---

**Contact: Jim Cross**

(316) 269-6481

**Headquarters**

1200 Epic Center  
301 N. Main  
Wichita, sas 67202  
(316)269-6481  
FAX (316)269-6484

**Topeka Office**

444 Quincy  
Topeka, Kansas 66683

**Kansas City Office**

500 State Avenue  
Suite 360  
Kansas City, Kansas 66101

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News releases are available at [www.usdoj.gov/usao/ks/](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/ks/)

Jan. 7, 2004

### ALIEN INDICTED IN DOCUMENT FRAUD CASE

Wichita, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Jose Luis Bernal-Contreras**, 32, a Mexican national known in the Wichita area as Luis Bernal, was indicted Thursday by a federal grand jury in Kansas City, Kan. on immigration charges. The charges include: falsely claiming to be a United States citizen; using a counterfeit Social Security card to obtain employment in the United States; possessing a counterfeit identification document issued by the United States; and five additional counts of unlawful use of a Social Security account number. Bernal was arraigned Friday before United States Magistrate Judge Karen M. Humphreys, who ordered him detained pending trial.

According to a complaint filed in the case, officials of Bernal's employer, Big Brothers Big Sisters in Wichita, called the Wichita Police Department and Immigration and Customs Enforcement after finding altered Mexican birth certificates and other identification documents in Bernal's desk.

If convicted of the most serious count, Bernal faces a statutory minimum sentence of two years in prison and a maximum of 10 years in prison. Most of the counts carry a

(More)

maximum sentence of five years in prison.

“Aliens who steal other persons’ identities to be employed in the United States will be prosecuted, imprisoned and deported,” Melgren said Friday. “There should be no confusion about the practice of lying, or providing false information or documentation regarding one’s identity or status in the United States to be employed. Such conduct is a violation of federal law. Assuring the accuracy of identification documents and representations is a vital national interest and those interests will be protected.”

As in any criminal case, a person indicted for a crime is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. An indictment merely alleges criminal conduct.

##